

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, MY
SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS RE GOM NARCOTICS EFFORTS

1. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED LAST FEB, THE GIST OF THE SECTION ON MALAYSIA OF THE REPORT BY THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS DESCRIBING THE COMMITTEE'S RECENT TRIP TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE ARTICLES NOTED CHAIRMAN LESTER WOLFF'S CONCERN THAT EXPANSION OF PENANG AIRPORT MIGHT FURTHER COMPLICATE ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING, GIVEN THE GOM'S INABILITY "TO EFFECTIVELY CURB THE FLOW OF HEROIN FROM MALAYSIA IN THE PAST". THEY ALSO CITED THE REPORT'S OBSERVATION THAT GOM ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS SUFFERED FROM A SEVERE LACK OF COORDINATION, AS WELL AS ITS STATEMENT THAT MALAYSIA "IS THE PRIMARY COUNTRY FOR THE PURCHASE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN HEROIN BY WESTERNERS".

2. MALAYSIAN POLICE AND OTHER NARCOTICS OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED TO US PRIVATELY THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE COMPLETELY NEGATIVE CAST OF THE REPORT ON MALAYSIA, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING MOST OF THE PROBLEMS IT CITES. A MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL CALLED THE DCM ON FEBRUARY 23 TO NOTE SOMEWHAT MORE FORMALLY THE GOM'S DISAPPOINTMENT. HE AGREED NEVERTHELESS
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WITH THE HOPE THAT THIS WOULD NOT AFFECT THE EXCELLENT USG-GOM COOPERATION ON NARCOTICS MATTERS. THE ONLY LOCAL EDITORIAL ON THE SUBJECT, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS RELATIVELY POSITIVE REGARDING THE REPORT AND CALLED FOR GOM MEASURES TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS CITED.

3. COINCIDENTALLY, THE GOM CABINET WAS BRIEFED IN
DETAIL FEBRUARY 28 ON THE DRUG SITUATION AND
PRESENTED WITH PROPOSALS FOR STRICTER LAWS (INCLUDING
A MANDATORY DEATH SENTENCE FOR TRAFFICKING) AND
ESTABLISHMENT OF A HIGH-LEVEL NATIONAL COORDINATING
COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO
DIRECT ALL THE GOM'S ANTI-NARCOTIC ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING BOTH ENFORCEMENT AND REHABILITATION.
ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE PROPOSALS ALSO CALL
FOR AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CUSTOMS AND
NARCOTICS BUREAU OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO THE ANTI-
DRUG EFFORT.

4. COMMENT. SOME FEELINGS WERE UNDOUBTEDLY
BRUISED BY THE REPORT'S FAILURE TO NOTE THE
DECIDEDLY POSITIVE, AS WELL AS THE ADMITTEDLY
NEGATIVE, ASPECTS OF THE GOM'S OVERALL NARCOTICS
EFFORT. (1977 SAW, FOR EXAMPLE, SOME MAJOR HEROIN
SEIZURES.) THE REPORT'S STATEMENT RE MALAYSIA
BEING THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF HEROIN PURCHASE IS ALSO
VIEWED HERE AS QUESTIONABLE. SO FAR WE HAVE NOT, HOWEVER,
DETECTED ANY INDICATION THAT THIS HAS DETRACTED FROM OUR
COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH GOM NARCOTICS OFFICIALS.

5. IN ANY CASE THE PROPOSALS PUT BEFORE THE
CABINET INDICATE THAT THE MALAYSIANS ARE ALREADY WELL
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AWARE OF THEIR PROBLEMS AND SEEM DISPOSED TO
TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO OVERCOME THEM. THE
COORDINATION PROBLEM WAS IN FACT BROUGHT PARTICULARLY
STRONGLY TO THEIR ATTENTION BY UNFDAC OFFICIAL DR.
GEORGE LING, WHO VISITED HERE LAST DECEMBER, AND
THE PROPOSALS PROBABLY DERIVE IN LARGE PART FROM
HIS TALKS AND REPORT TO THE GOM. WE ARE SEEKING
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO THE
CABINET AND HOW THEY MAY BE IMPLEMENTED. END COMMENT.
MILLER

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